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EARLY EUROPEAN TRAVELERS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY OF ARMENIAN ARCHITECTURE[1]

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From the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, Armenia made its début in the West through the accounts of voyagers from France, England, and Germany.[2] Whether as a transit point on the way to Persia or India, or as a final destination,

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[1] Parts of this article were presented to the Conference on Travelers to Egypt and the Near East at Oxford University (July 9-12, 1997) in a paper entitled "'It has a Moorish Flavor': Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Western Travelers to Armenia." Some of this material was included in the first chapter of my recent dissertation, *Medieval Armenian Architecture in Historiography: Josef Strzygowski and his Legacy* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1998). For further discussion, see my forthcoming book, *Medieval Armenian Architecture: Constructions of Race and Nation* (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming).

[2] The accounts of travelers to Armenia are too numerous to be listed here in full. In addition to those explored in this article, I have listed below (in chronological order) those travelers who, to greater or lesser degrees, considered the art and architecture of the land: H. von Poser, *Reise von Constantinopel aus, durch Bulgarey, Armenien, Persien, und Indien* (Jena: Krebs, 1675); John Chardin, *Journal du voiage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse & aux Indes orientales par la Mer Noire & par les Colchide: qui contient le voiage de Paris à Ispahan* (Amsterdam: J. Wolters and Y. Haring, 1686); John Macdonald Kinneir, *Journey through Asia Minor, Armenia, and Koordistan, in the Years 1813 and 1814; with Remarks on the Marches of Alexander, and Retreat of the Ten Thousand* (London: John Murray, 1818); Pierre Amedée Jaubert, *Voyage en Arménie et en Perse* (Paris: Pelicier, 1821); Eli Smith, *Researches of the Rev. E. Smith and Rev. H.G.O. Dwight in Armenia*, 2 vols. (Boston, MA: Crocker and Brewster, 1833); Carl Ritter, *Die Erdkunde von Asien*, vols. 9-11 (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1840); Karl Koch, *Wanderungen im Oriente wahrend der Jahre 1843 und 1844* (Weimar, 1846); Robert Curzon, *Armenia: A Year at Erzeroom, and on the Frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Persia* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854); John Ussher, *A Journey from London to Persepolis: including wanderings in Daghestan, Georgia, Armenia, Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, and Persia* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865); J.G. Taylor, "Journal of a Tour in Armenia, Kurdistan and Upper Mesopotamia, with Notes of Researches in the Deyrism Dagh," *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 38 (1868), pp. 281-346; Alfred Auguste Ernouf, *Le Caucase, la Perse et la Turquie d'Asie, d'après la relation de M. Le Baron Thielmann par Le Baron Ernouf* (Paris: E. Plon, 1876); Henry Fanshawe Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881); and George H. Hepworth, *Through Armenia on Horseback* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1898). For additional travelers to Armenia, see Ulrich Bock, *Die Armenische Baukunst: Geschichte und Problematik ihrer Erforschung* (Cologne: W. Kleikamp, 1983). See also the bibliographies in Ina Baghdiantz, *The Armenian Merchants of New Julfa: Some Aspects of their International Trade in the late Seventeenth Century (Iran, France)* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993); id., *The Shah's Silk for Europe's Silver: The Eurasian Silver Trade of Julfa Armenians in Safavid Iran and India (1530-1750)* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999); Jack Lewis Vartoogian, *The Image of Armenia in European Travel Accounts of the Seventeenth Century* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1974); H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901); Ghevond Alishan, *Shirak: teghagrut'iwn Patkeratsoyts* (Venice: S. Ghazar, 1881); and id., *Ayrarat bnashkharh Hayastaneayts* (Venice: S. Ghazar, 1890).

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scores of travelers from various political, religious, and academic spheres recorded their impressions of Armenia and its people. For the historian, these records are extremely valuable documents, not only of the early modern history of Armenia, but also of its reception by contemporary Westerners.[3]

Several of the accounts contain descriptions of medieval Armenian monuments, and are thus of particular interest to the art historian. In some cases, they are the only extant descriptions of lost medieval buildings. In others, they describe the conditions of monuments prior to modern restorations, as illustrated in John Chardin's engraving of Ējmiatsin, which includes an early view of the church of Hṙip'simē (Fig. 1). More importantly, however, the accounts form the first step toward the modern study of Armenian architecture. While modern scholars usually cast these travelers as naive amateurs, they show a surprising measure of critical acumen and attentiveness to detail.

This article will consider a group of three scholars whose work stretches from the early nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, who articulated most clearly and extensively their ideas on Armenian architecture. The focus will be on their theoretical approaches—how they interpreted the artistic style of the monuments and how they compared them to other architectural traditions, while considering their role in the development of scholarship on Armenian architecture. What I expect to demonstrate is how the main lines of modern scholarship on the subject of Armenian architecture can be traced directly back to the travel literature.

Frédèric Dubois de Montpéreux

Frédèric Dubois de Montpéreux (1798-1849), the French traveler and connoisseur of antiquities, visited the Caucasus in 1833-1834 and introduced the monuments of this region to modern Europe in his *Voyage Autour du Caucase*—a vast, five-volume work accompanied by five folios comprising a geographical atlas, picturesque views, and architectural, archeological, and geological studies.[4]

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[3] Recent interest in pre-modern travel to the East has generated numerous critical works, of which the following is a partial list. For a basic introduction to the problem, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). Early studies include V.V. Bartold, *La Découverte de l'Asie: Histoire de l'Orientalisme en Europe et en Russie* (Paris: Payot, 1947) and N. Iorga, ed., *Les Voyageurs Français dans l'Orient Européen: conference faites en Sorbonne* (Paris: J. Gamber, 1928). Newer theoretical studies include Giovanna Capone, ed., *Percorsi immaginati: Viaggio, metafora e modello in scrittori anglofoni d'Africa Asia, America, Australia*, Il Ventaglio 6 (Bologna: CLUEB, 1993); *Reisebeschreibungen des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts: eine Ausstellung aus Bestanden der Unviersitätsbibliothek und des Archivs "Spataufklarung" vom 3.10.79-15.11.79*, Veröffentlichen der Abteilung Gesellschaftswissenschaften und der Spezialabteilung 23 (Bremen: Universtität Bremen, Bibliothek, 1979); and Kenneth Wimmel, *The Alluring Target: In search of the secrets of Central Asia* (Washington, D.C., and Palo Alto, CA: Trackless Sands Press, 1996). For Italian travelers, see Fernand Braudel, ed., *L'Oriente*, Storie di viaggiatori italiani (Milan: Electa, 1985).

[4] *Voyage Autour du Caucase, chez les Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie, et en Crimée; avec un atlas géographique pittoresque, archéologique, géologique, etc*, 6 vols. and atlas (Paris: Librarie de Gide, 1839-1843).

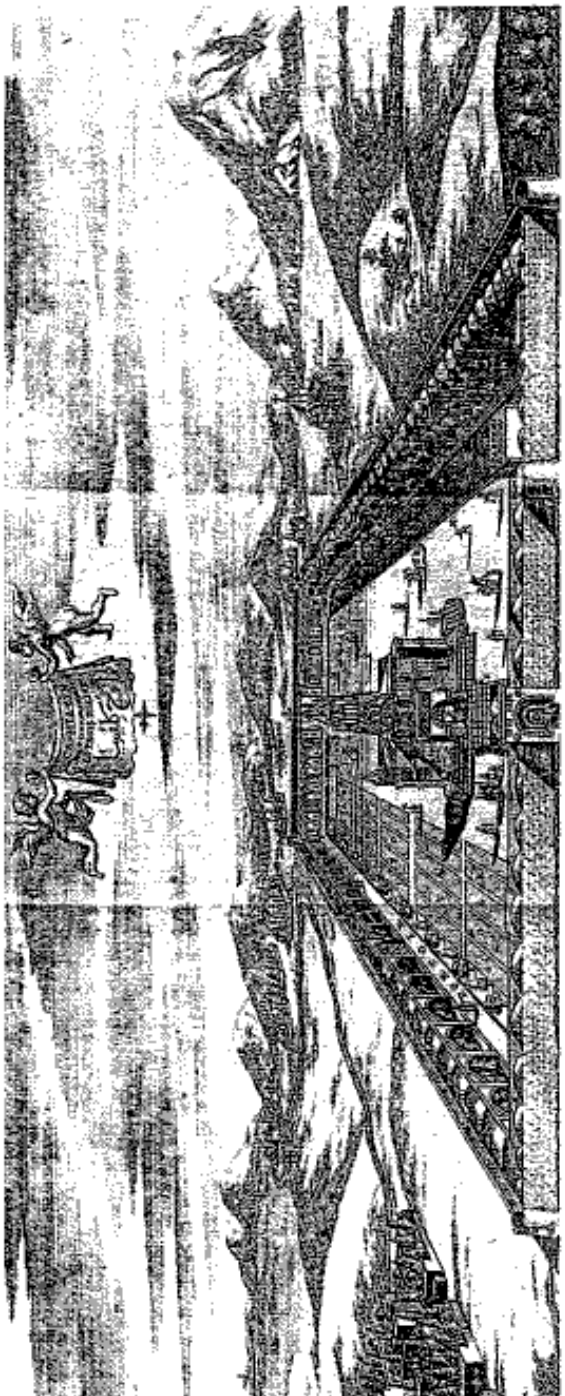

Figure 1: Scene of the City of Ējmiatsin.
John Chardin, *Journal du voiage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse & aux Indes orientales par la Mer Noire & par les Colchide: qui contient le voiage de Paris à Ispahan* (Amsterdam: J. Wolters and Y. Haring, 1686), drawing no. 9. (This engraving appears to be based on a model of 1660 by Jacob Peeters and published in Anvers/Antwerp. Chardin only changed a few details of the scene.)
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Like many other travelers to Armenia, Dubois was interested in the Biblical and Christian past of the country. One of his first stops was the city of Ējmiatsin, the See of the Catholicos and the site at which the conversion of Armenia to Christianity is believed to have taken place. While he was disappointed at not finding an entire city

Figure 2: Ējmiatsin.
Frédèric Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage Autor du Caucase ches les Tcherkesses et les Àbkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie, et en Crimée; avec un atlas géographique pittoresque, archéologique, géologique*, etc. (Paris and Neuchatel, 1839-1843). From the architectural and archeological atlas, pl. V.
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of medieval ruins,[5] the monastery (shown in one of the publication's lithographs [Fig. 2]) made a deep impression on Dubois; he inspected it and the cathedral in great detail.

Like many contemporary accounts of the monastery, Dubois begins with a long history of the site, proceeds to the liturgical divisions of the cathedral's interior, and provides a summary description of the building's form. Dubois' investigation of the church leads him further to hypotheses about its original construction, and he concludes that the primitive façade of the church would have been very different from the current.[6]

Dubois provides a drawing of his reconstruction (Fig. 3), in which he has removed the eighteenth-century belltowers. Based on an observation of the fragment

[5] Ibid., vol. III, p. 359.

[6] Dubois writes that "les façades primitives de l'église étaient bien différent de ce qu'elles sont actuellement" (Ibid., p. 372).

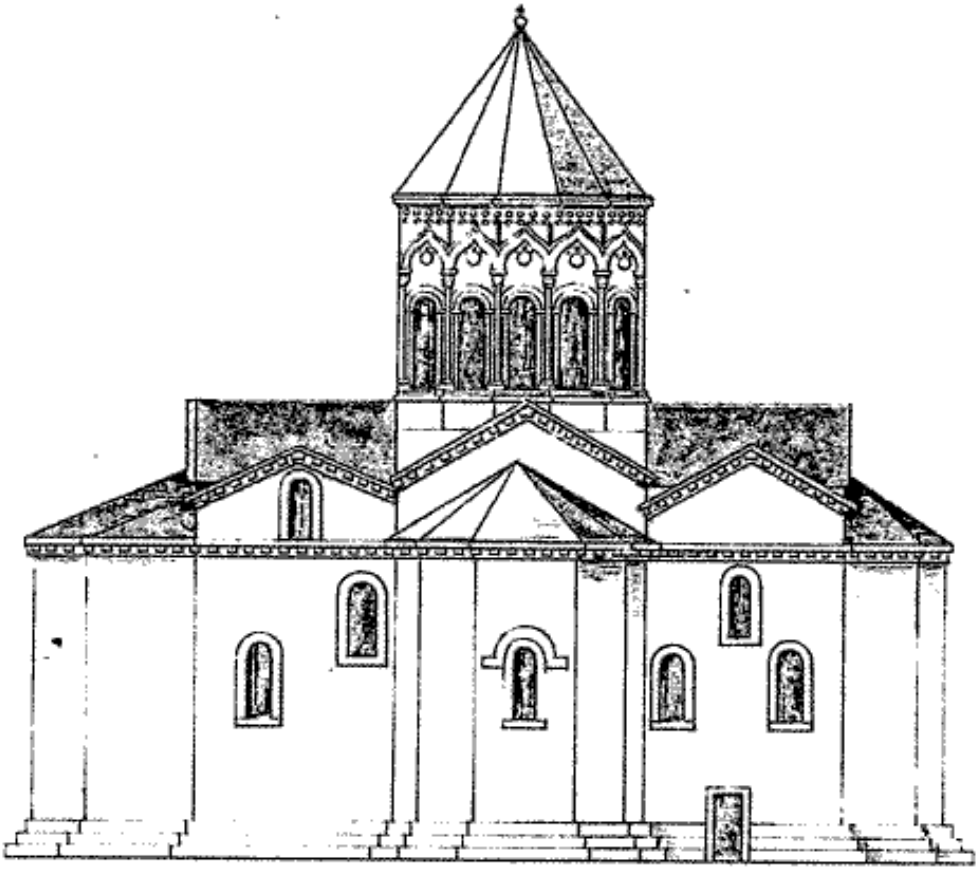

Fig. 1. Vue de l'Église d'Etchemiadzin dans son état primitif.

Figure 3: The Cathedral of Êjmiatsin, hypothetical reconstruction.
Frédèric Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage Autor du Caucase,* Architectural and archaeological atlas, pl. VII, Fig. 1.
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of a pediment embedded in the north wall of the church, Dubois also lowered and reshaped the rooflines, which, to my knowledge, he made before any other European traveler. Based on this feature, Dubois believed that the original elevation of the structure bore three pedimented sections with the central, higher one abutting the apse. "The perimeter of the church," he writes, "was decorated with a very simple cornice of the Corinthian style. . . . On this cornice, on each side of the church, were three pediments, the more elevated one carrying the dome. . . ."[7]

Certainly, there are problems with this reconstruction. The dentils on Dubois' pediments, for example, can be attributed more to an antiquarian's enthusiasm for

[7] "Le pourtour de l'église était orné d'une corniche très-simple de goût corinthien avec des caissons. Sur cette corniche s'appuyant, de chaque côté de l'église, trois frontons, dont l'un, plus élevé, répondait au dôme. . ." (Ibid.).

classical forms than to the actual original state of the building. Also, Dubois has retained the present drum, which is pierced almost completely with windows and decorated with pointed arcades, yet these particular features did not emerge until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Regardless, Dubois' reconstruction—the first hypothetical reconstruction of Ējmiatsin cathedral—is still seriously considered in discussions of its original phase. The later reconstructions of T'oros T'oramanyan and Armen Khatchatrian, for example, do not diverge very much from that of Dubois'.

Dubois offers a historical explanation for the presence of the antique forms at Ējmiatsin: the Armenian king Trdat's desire to assimilate with the culture of the Late Roman Empire. Dubois cites both the classical features at Ējmiatsin and the third-century Ionic temple (or tomb?) at Garni as evidence:

> Terdat, contemporary of Constantine and great friend of the Romans, among whom he was raised, wished to introduce Greek architecture into Armenia. He [thus] constructed . . . the magnificent temple or palace of the Ionic order, the superb ruins of which one admires at Garni. The first church of Armenia was also constructed under Terdat . . . its pediments and its cornices were ornamented with dentils.[8]

"Thus," Dubois concludes, "in adopting the Roman civilization, [Trdat] also wanted to introduce Greek architecture into Armenia."[9]

As with the reconstruction, there are several problems with Dubois' theory. The temple of Garni, for example, predates the Cathedral of Ējmiatsin by at least a century. Furthermore, Ējmiatsin's fourth-century state, despite the numerous modern excavations, has still not been discerned.[10] Note, however, that Dubois has already begun to build a chronology; associating the classical features with an early period in Armenian history, he has defined two monuments which demonstrate those qualities—early Ējmiatsin and Garni.

Let us follow Dubois' development further. While at the Cathedral of Ējmiatsin, he notes that the classicizing features are in part obscured by later remodelings. The later renovations, however, are not perceived by Dubois as simply evidence for a new architectural fashion—he writes that the classical features were removed because

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[8] "Terdat, contemporain de Constantin et grand ami des Romains au milieu desquels il avait éte élevé, avait voulu introduire en Arménie l'architecture grecque. Il construisit pour sa soeur Khosrovitoukhd, ce magnifique temple ou palais d'ordre ionique, dont on admire les superbes ruines à Garni. La première église d'Arménie construite aussi sous Terdat . . . ses frontons et ses corniches ornés de caissons" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 407).

[9] "En adoptant la civilisation romaine, avait aussi voulu introduire l'architecture grecque en Arménie" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 374).

[10] For reports on the excavations, see A. Sahinyan, "Nor nyut'er Ējmiatsni Mayr tachari kaṙuts'vatsk'i veraberyal" (New evidence on the structure of the Cathedral of Ējmiatsin), *Ējmiatsin*, nos. 8-9 (1956), pp. 60-69; nos. 11-12, pp. 56-67; "Ējmiatsni Mayr tachari chartarapetakan kerparĕ" (The architectural form of the Cathedral of Ējmiatsin), *Ējmiatsin*, no. 1 (1961), pp. 43-63; and more recently A. Khatchatrian, *L'architecture Arménienne du IV^e^ au VI^e^ siècle*, Bibliothèque des cahiers archéologiques 7 (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1971).

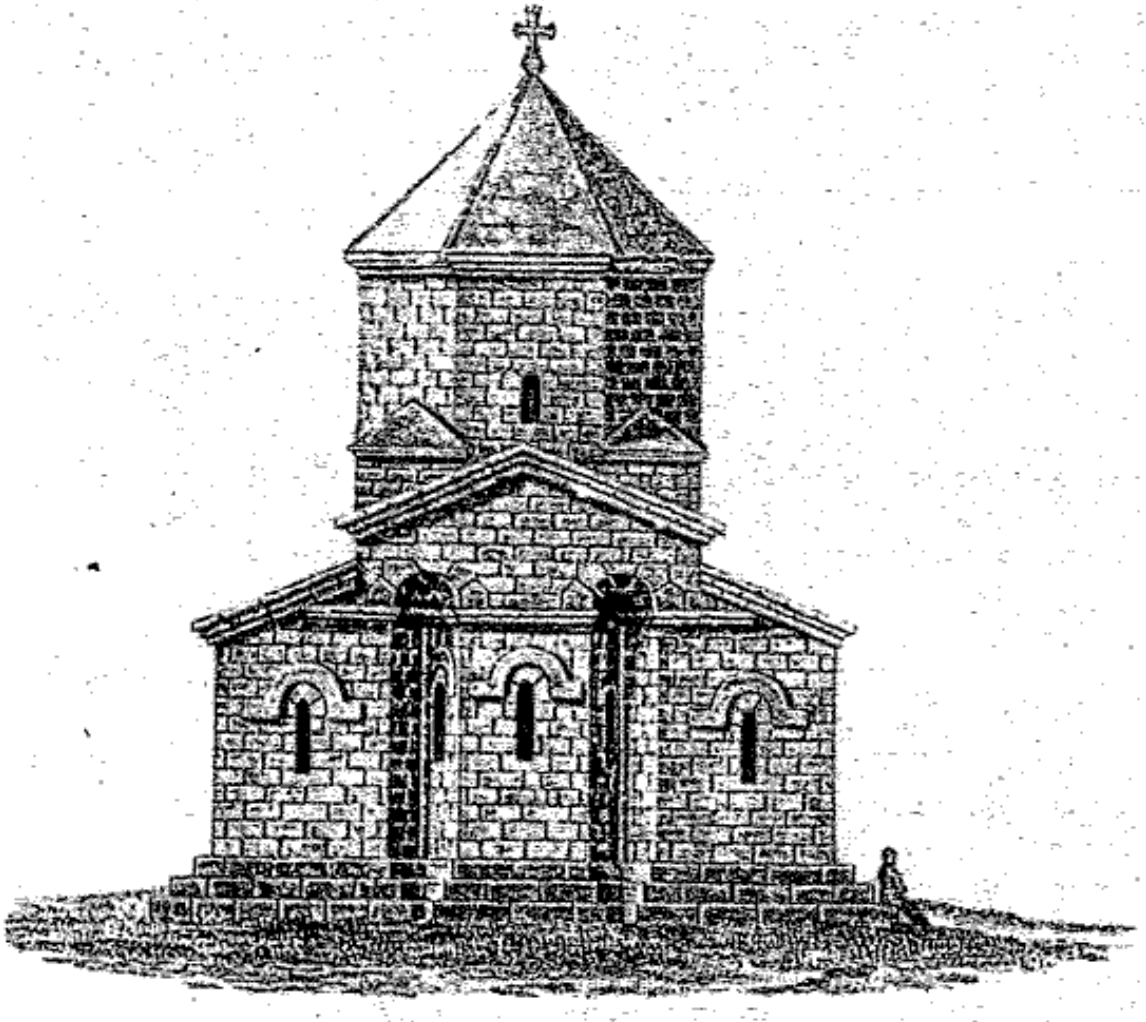

Figure 4: The church of Hṙip'simē.
Frédèric Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage Autor du Caucase,* Architectural and archaeological atlas, pl. VIII, fig. 1.
By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

they did not reflect the style of Armenia, thus "pediments and dentils all disappeared."[11] What we have, then, is the beginning of an articulation of an Armenian style, one that is distinct from, and antithetical to, the "Greek" style.

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[11] "les frontons et caissons étaient disparu" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 104).

The Armenian style is detected by Dubois in another monument in Ējmiatsin, the domed, centrally planned church of Hŕip'simē (Fig. 4). According to Dubois, the simplicity, massiveness, and grandeur of Hŕip'simē were the key elements of the Armenian style. Further, this style reveals a legacy of the building traditions of ancient Egypt and the Near East, a connection which Dubois emphasizes by his frontal presentation of the church—one of the only such views in his work—and which is stated explicitly in the text:

> The Armenians stayed faithful to this ancient oriental genre, to luxurious ornaments and carvings, to massive forms that one observes in the porticos of Persepolis, the tombs of the kings, and [forms] which were perhaps only the echo of the monuments of Egypt. . . .[12]

Here, Dubois suggests a point of origin for Armenian architecture in Persia and Egypt. However, he does not view the tradition as derivative. Rather, he believes that the Armenians merely incorporated the foreign traditions into a completely unique and distinct style, which, Dubois writes, was created by them and "sacred to them."[13] Thus, the resurgence of this style after the classical phase was an assertion of ethnic identity. Dubois asserts that "the Armenians soon returned to their old style. One does not see them imitating the Greeks."[14]

Following the construction of Hŕip'simē and Gayianē at Ējmiatsin, according to Dubois, a host of other Armenian buildings were built based on their model. But the Armenian style also reached northward into the Caucasus. The church of Sion in Georgia, for example, is connected with Armenian builders, after whom, Dubois asserts, the Georgians were "faithful imitators."[15]

Another Armenian monument mentioned by Dubois is the narthex (*zhamatun*) of the monastery of Geghard, not far from the temple of Garni (Fig. 5). Dubois seems again to have added classical details of his own—the Roman coffer-like forms on the central vaults are pure fancy and further attest to an interest in antique motifs. However, it is the sculptural decoration that is most striking to him. Observing the interior, he writes that "[o]ne well recognizes here the fantastic oriental taste . . . not a capital is spared for carving; it is the same with the vaults and other details. . . ."[16] In particular, Dubois is interested in the stalactite decoration on the central dome, and

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[12] "Les Armeniéns restèrent fidèles à cet antique genre oriental, à ce luxe d'ornements et de ciselures, à ces formes massives qu'on remarque dans le portiques de Persepolis, dans les tombeaux des rois, et qui n'étaient peut-être que l'écho des monuments de l'Egypte. . ." (Dubois, *Voyage Autour du Caucase*, vol. I, p. 407).

[13] ". . . ils se créèrent une architecture sacrée à eux" (Ibid.).

[14] "Les Arméniens en revinrent bientôt à leur style. On ne voit nulle part qu'ils aient imité les Grecs" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 374).

[15] "les fidèles copistes des monuments de l'Arménie" (Ibid., vol. I, p. 409).

[16] "On reconnait bien ici le goût fantastique oriental . . . pas un chapiteau ne se ressemble pour le travail; il en est de même des voûtes et des autres détails. . ." (Ibid., vol. III, p. 395).

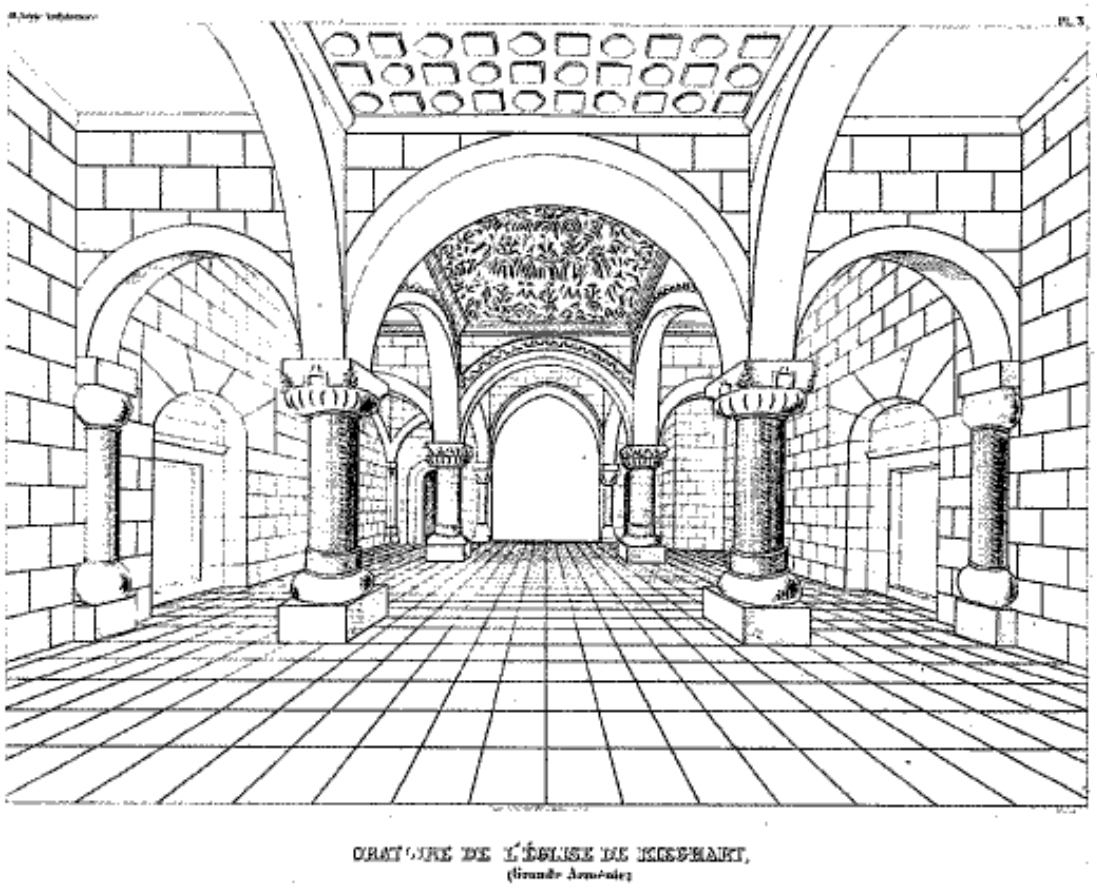

Figure 5: The narthex (*gavit)* at the monastery of Geghard.
Frédèric Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage Autor du Caucase,* Architectural and archaeological atlas, pl. X.
By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

links it to "the ancient type of Arab or Moorish formula with which the Turks and Persians ornament their niches and sometimes their vaults."[17]

Dubois is not overtly critical of this decorative style, which many of his contemporaries linked to Islamic architecture and viewed as a product of a wild and uncultivated imagination.[18] However, he does regard the luxurious decoration at Geghard as the end of the development of Armenian architecture. While the churches

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[17] "On y retrouve le type ancien des formes arabes ou mauresques dont les Turcs et les Persans ornent leurs niches et quelquefois leurs voûtes" (Ibid., p. 393).

[18] Many early European accounts of Islamic architecture describe it in such terms. One may consider, for example, the dictionary entry on Moorish architecture written only ten years after Dubois' *Voyage*, which describes it as "eminently fanciful, but this we judge to be rather to its praise than otherwise, as evidencing a lively and fertile imagination on the part of their architects; their buildings are indeed the embodiment of a luxuriant fancy, tempered, however, in most cases with taste and judgment." *Nicholson's Dictionary of the Science and Practice of Architecture, Building, and Carpentry* (London, after 1866), p. 209.

of Hṙip'simē and Gayanē show their great age by their simple proportions, he writes, "those constructed later are always enriched with sculptures and carvings. . . ."[19]

From Dubois' remarks, which are scattered throughout his travel account, one is tempted to draw up a chronology. Dubois' development begins with an indigenous Armenian architecture, connected to ancient Persia and Egypt, followed by a brief classical phase (as seen at Garni and the first period of Ējmiatsin Cathedral). With the remodeling of Ējmiatsin and the monuments of Hṙip'simē and Gayanē, the classical features were replaced again by the original style, which was simpler and more massive in its form, and which subsequently spread through Armenia and Georgia. This style became increasingly decorated through the influence of Islamic architecture.

Certainly, the modern scholar could raise many objections to Dubois' conclusions. He dated the current structure of Hṙip'simē, for example, three centuries before its seventh-century foundation.[20] Dubois' corpus of monuments was also too small to allow a full grasp of the material. For Dubois the "classicizing" era of Armenian architecture ended with Trdat, yet we know today that classical features recur throughout the development of Armenian architecture. If he had traveled to Ani, he would have discovered tenth-century monuments dressed in a familiar classical vocabulary.[21] But, owing to problems with Turkish officials, Dubois never reached Ani. He tells us wistfully in his account of the anguish of being "26 *verst* from Ani and not seeing the magnificent ruins!"[22]

Further, Dubois' theories about the origin of Armenian architecture in ancient Egypt reflect a much more common nineteenth-century French fascination with that land than an actual connection between the two traditions.[23] References to Egypt, in fact, occur frequently in Dubois' commentary on Armenia. On the valley road to Geghard, he writes, "were entire rows of needle-shaped rocks and obelisks larger than those of Egypt."[24] Elsewhere, the churches of Ējmiatsin "surge up like Egyptian monuments on the plain. . . ."[25]

Despite the lack of a modern perspective, I would argue that Dubois' account is the most important nineteenth-century Western work on Armenian architecture.

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[19] "Celles qu'on construisit plus tard s'enrichirent toujours davantage de sculptures et de ciselures. . ." (Dubois, *Voyage Autour du Caucase*, vol. I, p. 407).

[20] Ibid., vol. I, p. 405.

[21] One thinks specifically of the Church of the Savior (Surb P'rkich')—a rotunda which features a heavily classicizing portal with dentils and entablature.

[22] "Être à 26 verst d'Ani et ne pas voir ces ruines magnifiques!" (Ibid., vol. III, p. 437) (1 *verst*=0.6629 miles or 1.067 kilometers).

[23] See Peter Clayton, *The Rediscovery of Ancient Egypt: Artists and Travellers in the 19th Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982). For contemporary travelers accounts of Egypt, see Vivant Denon, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt during the Campaigns of General Bonaparte* (London: B. Crosby, 1802; repr., London: Darf, 1986); Francis Steegmuller, ed. and trans., *Flaubert in Egypt: A Sensibility On Tour; A narrative drawn from Gustave Flaubert's travel notes & letters*, (London: Bodley Head, 1972; Boston: Little, Brown, 1972; repr., Chicago: Academy Chicago Limited, 1979).

[24] "Des rangs entiers d'aiguilles et d'obélisques, plus grands que ceux d'Egypte. . ." (Dubois, *Voyage Autour du Caucase*, vol. III, p. 392).

[25] "[Q]ui surgissent comme des monuments égyptiens sur la plaine. . ." (Ibid., p. 359).

Contrary to the prevalent opinion about him, Dubois does not see Armenian architecture as a hybrid style or a branch of Byzantine architecture, but rather attributes an indigenous style to Armenian architecture, a theory that remains virtually unchallenged to this day.[26]

More proof of this is found in a curious page of the architectural volume (Fig. 6). It is a collection of several drawings, including, at the top, details from the monastery of Geghard. Curiously, however, we also find the inclusion of monuments outside of Armenia and Georgia. Underneath the scenes of Geghard is the Armenian church of Feodosia in the Crimea. Despite its lack of evident similarity with medieval churches in Armenia, Dubois notes the roundel decorations of the portal and the khach'k'ars on the interior, and views it as "a copy of the Christian edifices in Armenia."[27] This building, along with the Galician castle of Jasloviets, which once contained the residence of an Armenian bishop, prompts Dubois to remark, "It is interesting to see to what degree Armenia, in its foreign colonies, loyally conserved the artistic traditions of its fatherland."[28] Thus Geghard, the Crimean church, and the castle in Galicia are titled "Monuments in the Armenian Style."

We may question Dubois' argument for the Armenian style of these churches—particularly as he seems more concerned with ornament than with architecture—but it is impossible to deny the importance of his observation for the history of scholarship. Not only was he the first Western scholar to identify an Armenian style of architecture, he was also the first to argue for its diffusion, a theory which would gain favor in the work of Josef Strzygowski some seventy years later.

Dubois' achievements have gone almost entirely unnoticed in scholarly literature. Most inaccurate are the views of Ulrich Bock, who writes of Dubois' inability to make any critical analysis of the material,[29] and Ramadze Mepisashavili, who believes that Dubois confused Georgian and Byzantine art and considered Armenian art merely as "an afterthought."[30] Quite contrary to these statements, I have shown that Dubois deserves far more attention than these scholars would allow. His definition of an Armenian style, as well as his efforts toward chronology and hypothetical reconstruction, earns Dubois the most significant place in the nineteenth-century scholarship on Armenian architecture.

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[26] There are certainly objections to be made against this theory. This issue is the subject of my recent talk, "Native and Foreign in Armenian architecture: The Case for a Cross-Cultural Study," Conference of the College Art Association, February 21-28, 1998, Toronto.

[27] "[U]ne copie des édifices consacrés au culte en Arménie...et [he continues], la tradition artistique s'y est conservée pure" (Ibid., vol. V, p. 296).

[28] "Il est intéressant de voir avec quelle constance l'Arménien, dans ses colonisations lointaines, a conservé fidèlement les traditions artistiques de sa première patrie" (Ibid.).

[29] Bock, *Die Armenische Baukunst*, p. 19.

[30] R. Mepisaschwili and W. Zinzadse, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien* (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1977), p. 8f. Also, W. Eugene Kleinbauer acknowledges Dubois' influence on subsequent scholarship, but believes he regarded both Armenian and Georgian architecture as an offshoot of Byzantine architecture—an observation that I do not find substantiated by a reading of the text. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture: An Annotated Bibliography and Historiography* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1992), p. xcix.

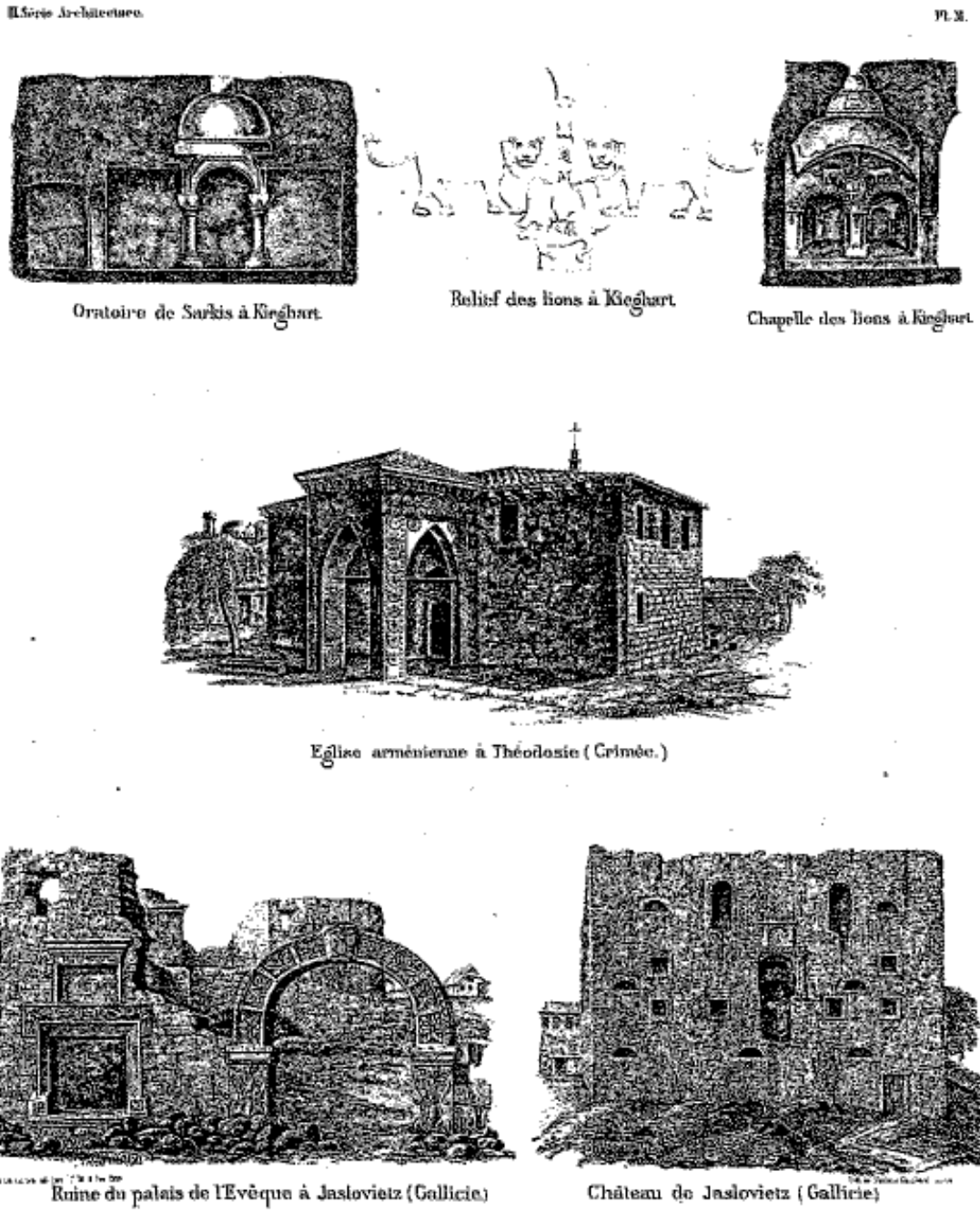
IIe Série Architecture.
Pl. XI.
Oratoire de Sarkis à Kieghart.
Relief des lions à Kieghart.
Chapelle des lions à Kieghart.
Eglise arménienne à Théodosie (Crimée.)
Ruine du palais de l'Evêque à Jaslovietz (Gallicie)
Château de Jaslovietz (Gallicie)
MONUMENS DE STYLE ARMÉNIEN.

Figure 6: Miscellaneous drawings, entitled "Monumens de Style Arménien."
Frédèric Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage Autor du Caucase,* Architectural and archaeological atlas, pl. XI.
By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Armenian Architecture and the West: Texier and Layard

In the nineteenth century, another issue emerged, which occupied scholars of Western art for generations—the relation between Armenian and Gothic architecture. With this topic, we may turn to two scholars, Charles Texier and Austen Henry Layard.

The French architect Charles Félix Marie Texier (1802-1871) was sent by the French ministries of the Interior and Education to Turkey, Armenia, Persia, and Mesopotamia. Unlike Dubois, Texier was able to go to Ani, where he recorded architectural plans and attractive views which were to be used in studies of Armenian architecture and of general art history for decades.[31]

Texier made an equally important contribution to the interpretation of Armenian architecture—he noted the resemblance between the building forms at Ani Cathedral (Fig. 7) and the Gothic churches of Western Europe. Texier, for example, compared the arcaded façades of the Cathedral to medieval Italian architecture.[32]

However, Texier was somewhat confused by the structure. Although aware of its tenth-century foundation date, he felt it also contained features much more advanced:[33]

> [I]f one judged by the façade alone, one could believe that this building belonged to the tenth century, because it recalls certain churches or chapels of Germany that date to this epoch, but once one enters the interior and takes note of the form of the compound columns and the pointed arches that crown the sides, one may not doubt that this building is more modern.[34]

Thus, for Texier, the columns and pointed arches seemed to anticipate Gothic architecture to such a degree as to cause him considerable suspicion regarding the structure's date. However, later in the text, Texier accepts the fact of the early appearance of the pointed arch in Armenia as a phenomenon independent from the influence of Western medieval architecture:

> All those who have studied medieval art in Europe will be inclined to consider this edifice as a product of the thirteenth century. It bears this effect in all its aspects, but the inscribed date on the portal proves that it is much more ancient, and that the pointed arch was in use in Armenia at a time when the Romanesque style was the only one used in Europe.[35]

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[31] Charles Félix Marie Texier, *Description de l'Arménie, de la Perse, de la Mesopotamie, publié sous les auspices des ministres de l'intérieur et le l'instruction publique* (Paris: F. Didot Frères, 1842), 2 vols., with a portfolio of drawings, plans, maps, and ten plates.

[32] Ibid., vol. I, p. 112.

[33] However, Texier had not always been aware of its tenth-century date; in earlier essays, he had dated the building to the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries.

[34] "Si l'on n'en jugeait par le façade, on pourrait croire que cet édifice remonte au IX[e] siècle, car elle rappelle certain églises ou chapelles de l'Allemagne qui datent de cette epoque mais dés que l'on entre dans l'intérieur quand on s'est bien rendu compté de la forme de ses colonnes accomplées et des arc en ogives que couronnent les bas côtés, on ne saurait douter que cet édifice, ne soit plus moderne" (Ibid., p. 98). The account of the cathedral is included within a larger chapter on the city of Ani, on pages 94-119, and includes remarks on the church of Tigran Honents' and the Church of the Shepherd. Texier also discusses the church of T'ekor (Dighour) on pages 114-128.

[35] "Tout homme que a étudié le marche de l'art du moyen age en Europe, sera disposé à regarder cet édifice comme un . . . du XIII[e] siècle: il en porte en effect tous les caractères, mais le date inscrite sur le portail prouve que il est beaucoup plus ancien, et que l'arc aigu était en usage en Arménie à une

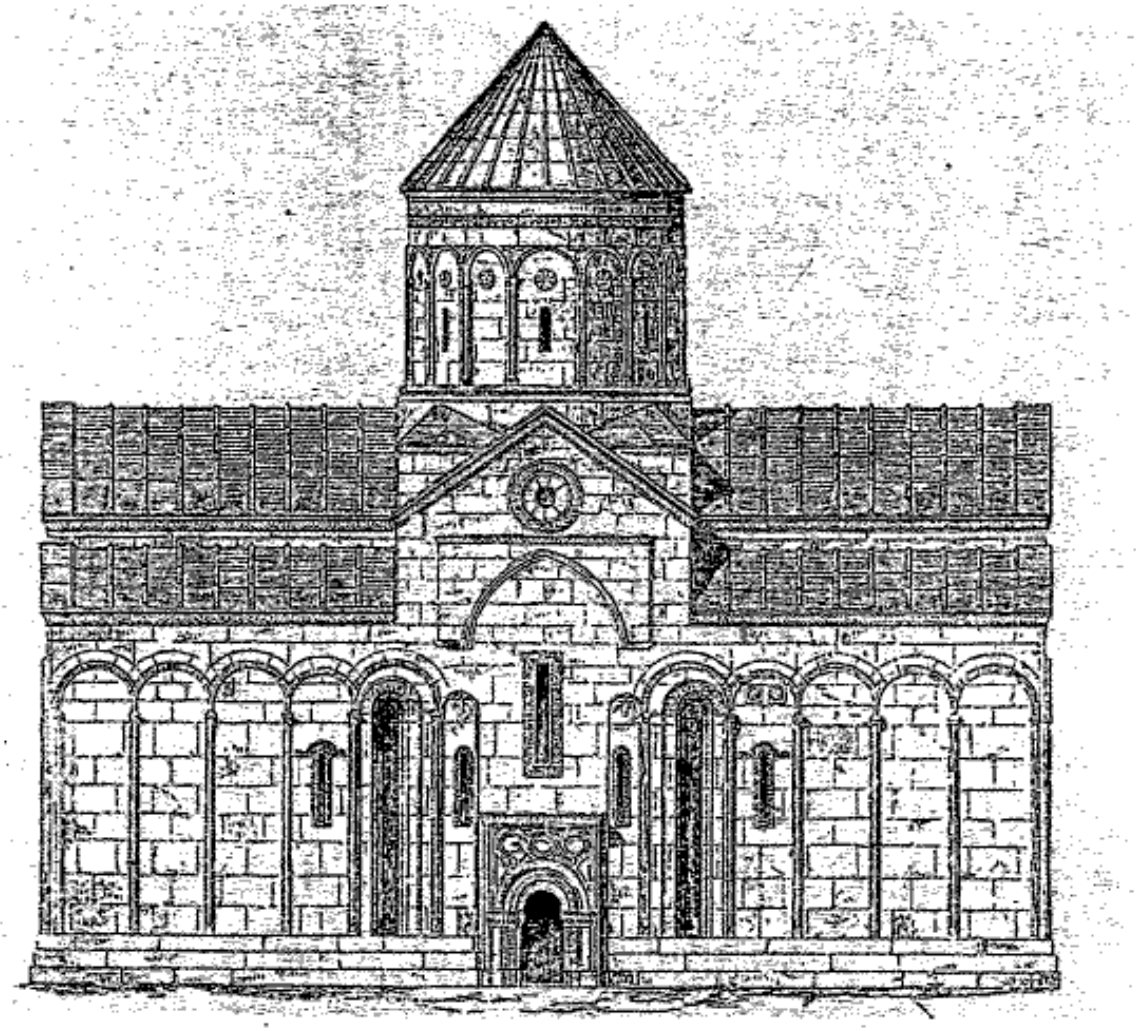

Figure 7: Ani Cathedral.
Charles Texier, repr. in James Fergusson, *A History of Architecture in All Countries*, vol. II (London: John Murray, 1874), p. 471, fig. 924.

Such a suspicious attitude toward the date of the Cathedral, and surprise regarding its Gothic-looking features, were common among European travelers thereafter.[36]

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epoque on le style roman étant le seul que fait usité en Europe" (Ibid., p. 112). The opinion that the style of Ani Cathedral was not imported from the West was also expressed soon after by J. Fergusson in his *History of Architecture in all Countries*, vol. II (London: John Murray, 1874), p. 470.

[36] Three years after Texier's visit, his position was taken up by W. J. Hamilton, whose work deserves a brief digression. Hamilton undertook extensive trips through Turkey in the late 1830s and early 1840s and recorded in his *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia with Some Account of Their Antiquities and Geology* (London: J. Murray, 1842), a work which was subsequently translated into German (*Reisen in Kleinasien, Pontus, und Armenien nebst antiquarischen und geologischen Forschungen* [Leipzig: Weidmann, 1843]) and gained wide interest. His descriptions are more detailed than Dubois' and include a particularly interesting account of Ani—*Account of the Ruins of the City of Ani in Armenia* (London, 1839). At the Cathedral of Ani, it is the pointed arches and clustered capitals which most occupy Hamilton. Of the famous church of the Apostles, on the

Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894), an English Assyriologist, also traveled to Armenia during the 1840s, and included a section on Armenia in his *Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon.*[37] Layard traveled to Nineveh with a British regiment with the task of recording the excavations. En route, Layard passed through Armenia from Trebizond and wrote an account of his impressions of the people and monuments.

Layard's route carried him too far west to visit Ējmiatsin or Ani. His most extensive commentary was devoted instead to the small octagonal church of Varzahan, located in the southern region of Armenia and dated to the tenth-eleventh century (Fig. 8). He provides a description and a small engraving of the building (which he believed to have been a baptistery), admires the paintings and the sculpted capitals, and concludes that the decorations in general "call to mind the European Gothic of the Middle Ages."[38] Mistakenly dating the church to the twelfth century, Layard nevertheless writes that "much that passed into the Gothic" was "probably derived" from Varzahan.[39]

Layard's interest in the origins of Gothic architecture led to him to insist on the value of Armenian architecture:

> The architect, or traveler, interested in the history of that graceful and highly original branch of art . . . should extend his journey to the remains of ancient Armenian cities, far from high roads and mostly unexplored. . . . He would discover almost daily, details, ornaments, and forms, recalling to his mind the various orders of architecture, which, at an early period, succeeded to each other in Western Europe and England.[40]

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northeast side of Ani, he writes, "The arches which bore the roof were round, but at the middle were pointed arches and here and there one found various other decorations, that one would usually call Gothic" (p. 191). In the final and most intriguing sentence of the passage, he writes, "I cannot escape the idea that one could identify the origin of the rich Gothic and Saracenic styles if one studied the capitals and the numerous angles or niches between the arches, in which one may find a systematic sequence of complete simplicity in the overladen intricacy."

Thus, Hamilton imagines a common origin for Gothic and Saracenic styles. That Gothic architecture was brought from the east was a theory already born in the seventeenth century, with Christopher Wren, but continued to enjoy a considerable following. Note also that rather than viewing Armenian architecture as a composite for Byzantine and Saracenic styles, he entertains the idea that in Armenian architecture could be found the origins for both.

Hamilton's view of Armenian architecture looks forward to the beginnings of a long-standing comparison between Armenian and Gothic architecture in the early twentieth century. In particular, it anticipates the work of Jurgis Baltrušaitis, who also sought a structural system common to both traditions.

[37] London: John Murray, 1853. The book was also published the same year in New York, both in unabridged form by Harper Brothers and in abridged form by G.P. Putnam & Co., and translated into German in 1856 (Leipzig). Quotations from the text use the unabridged New York edition.

[38] Layard, *Discoveries*, p. 7.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., p. 27.

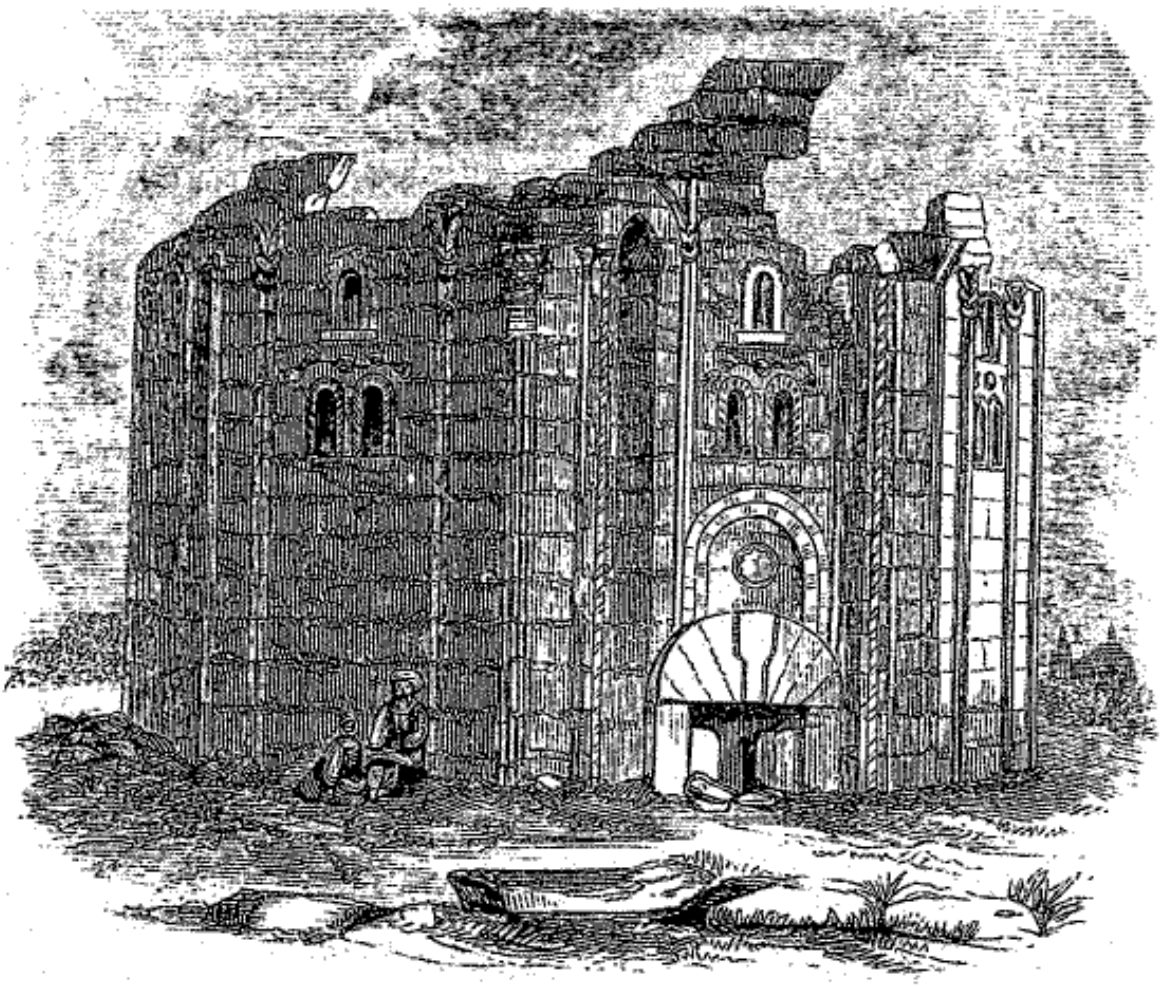

Figure 8: The Church of Varzahan.
Henry Austen Layard, *Discoveries Among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (New York, 1853, p. 6.

Thus Layard, after Texier, pioneered the comparative study of Armenian and Western medieval architecture.

Henry Finnis Blosse Lynch

The last account we will consider is that of Henry Finnis Blosse Lynch (1863-1913), whose trip to Armenia is recorded in a two-volume work entitled *Armenia, Travels and Studies*.[41] Dated 1901, Lynch's was the first modern Western study of Armenian architecture. His work, which numbers over 900 pages, includes hundreds of photographs, a classification of ground plans, an attempt to reconstruct original phases, and a bibliography. Furthermore, Lynch was able to benefit from the huge advances in Armenian epigraphy made late in the previous century by Marie-Felicité Brosset,[42] whose translations Lynch carried with him to Armenia. Lynch's *Armenia*

[41] London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901.

[42] His publications are listed and described by Laurent Brosset, *Bibliographie analytique des ouvrages de Monsieur Marie-Felicité Brosset* (St. Petersburg: Imp. de l'Academie des Sciences, 1887).

also postdates important historical surveys of art that included sections on Armenian architecture, such as those of Carl Schnaase and Auguste Choisy.[43]

The corpus of monuments he presented was also wider than ever before. Traveling to both the Russian and the Turkish Armenian provinces (the latter of which had hitherto been almost completely ignored by European voyagers), Lynch provided individual commentaries on each of the buildings as well as a general discussion on the origins and development of Armenian architecture.

Despite the increase in sources and monuments, however, Lynch's approach does not differ drastically from his predecessors. Like the earlier travelers, he is subjective and personal. A good example of his tone occurs in his description of the layout of the monastery of Ējmiatsin:

> Imagine the Old Court of Trinity College at Cambridge without the gateway, the hall and the chapel, and with a church of some size placed in the centre where the fountain stands. . . . I had always understood that our quadrangle at Trinity was the largest in the world; although I believe some American university was building one a few inches bigger not so very long ago. But the great court of Edgmiatsin [*sic*] perhaps already makes the record. . . . Our cousins across the Atlantic must bestir themselves.[44]

As for Lynch then, Armenia is not an entirely foreign world, but he recalls the familiar forms of his own land. This is even more the case when we look further at Lynch's observations about individual monuments. Lynch, writing in late Victorian and early Edwardian England, carried with him a very keen sense of good architecture, which is readily apparent in his remarks on Armenia. More than any of the other travelers we have looked at, Lynch's work reveals how much architectural tastes of the day influenced the reception of medieval monuments.

For Lynch, simplicity was the key to quality. Hṙip'simē, for example, is deemed superior to the Cathedral of Ējmiatsin, because it lacks the "unsightly projections of the apsidal arms."[45] It is the geometrically plain exterior of Hṙip'simē, which is closer to a cube, that is favored. Both the churches of T'alish and T'alin are cited as buildings of "great simplicity" and "much beauty of form."[46] T'alin (Fig. 9), according to Lynch, ranks among the most charming examples of the Armenian style and is the "most beautiful building I had yet seen in Armenia."[47] At Ani, the Cathedral's chief aesthetic merit is, again, the "extreme simplicity of the design."[48]

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[43] Karl Schnaase, *Geschichte der Bildenden Künste*, vol. 3 (Dusseldorf: J. Buddeus, 1844), chapter five; Auguste Choisy, *Histoire de L'Architecture* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1899), pp. 21, 30, 58, and 84-86.

[44] Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. I, p. 243.

[45] Ibid., p. 269.

[46] Ibid., p. 320.

[47] Ibid., p. 322.

[48] Ibid., p. 371.

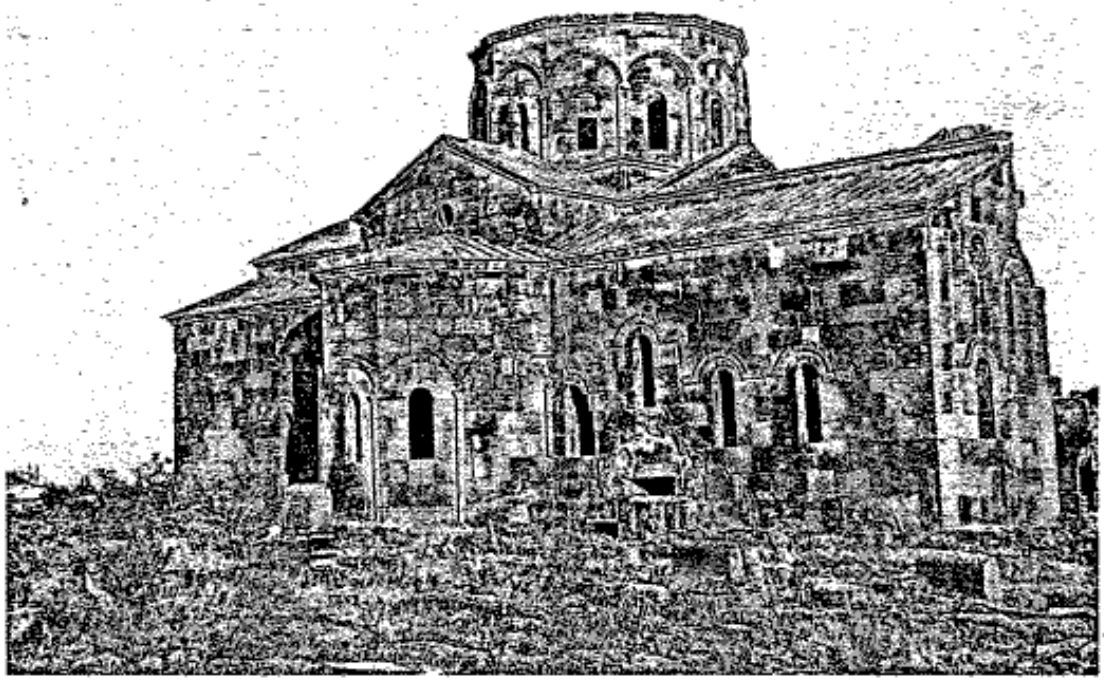

Figure 9: T'alin Cathedral.
Photo: Author

Lynch thus praises not the decoration or the proto-Gothic features of the Cathedral, but rather its use of simple, sparingly decorated forms. The importance of simplicity even prompts Lynch to harsh criticism of the heavily sculpted church of Aght'amar, for "[s]uch treatment [of the exterior walls] would be repugnant to the chaster spirit of the architects of Ani and may denote that the standard of culture in the southern principality was not so high as in [the province of] Shirak."[49]

While praise for simplicity was not uncommon among admirers of architecture at the turn of the century, Lynch's love for plain forms can be connected to contemporary currents in English architecture and architectural criticism. By the 1890s, the flamboyantly decorated style of Victorian Gothic had lost favor, and several voices called for reform.[50] One of them, the English architect Halsey Ricardo (1854-1928), made his complaints in an article of 1895, entitled "Architectural Simplicity":

> We are, let us hope, at a measurable distance from the end of this present dissolute style, for dissolute it is. As long as the mouldings and the ornament that further and explain the meaning of the design are organic—all is well. Simplicity in architecture means good art in architecture. . . . All this welter of indiscriminate ornament is not practical. . . ."[51]

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[49] Ibid., vol. II, p. 132.

[50] See Alastair Service, ed., *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins* (London: Architectural Press, 1977).

[51] Ibid., p. 12.

Ricardo, who was involved in the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was only one of the many supporters of sparsely decorated forms. In a syllabus drafted by the famous architect William Lethaby for an introductory course at the Royal Institute of British Architecture, the aims were made clear—"the practical but aesthetically pleasing use of materials in abstract forms *without ornament* [emphasis mine]."[52]

Lynch's Edwardian view of Armenian architecture provides the reader with much more than an essay on architectural taste and a ranking of monuments; it also leads him to identify a distinct Armenian style and establish a chronology. In a passage from his second volume, he instructs the reader "whose leisure may be unequal to a perusal of this long description" to focus on the Cathedral, the church of St. Gregory the Illuminator, and two polygonal chapels because "[t]hese monuments are examples of the Armenian style at its very best."[53]

What is this Armenian style? Lynch believed it was composed of Byzantine and Gothic elements. However, his focus is not on the hybrid nature of the style, but rather on its purity prior to the infusion of the "Saracenic style." Both the cathedral and the two chapels, Lynch writes, are examples of the Armenian style "before it was brought under the direct influence of Mussulman art."[54] The "Saracenic" character of Armenian architecture is, according to Lynch, evidence of a degeneration. Both the narthex of the church of "St. Gregory" (Tigran Honents') and the Church of the Apostles are described as of "a later date and . . . purely Saracenic in character."[55] Thus, Lynch asks the reader to mentally remove the porch from St. Gregory so that the church can be perceived in its original, pure state.

Along with his view of the degeneration of Armenian architecture comes a corresponding view of the development of Armenians themselves. He writes:

> [Armenia's] monuments throw a strong light upon the character of the Armenian people. . . . They leave no doubt that this people may be included in the small number of races who have shown themselves susceptible of the highest culture. . . . They testify to the tragic suddenness with which the development of the race was arrested . . . , and when their capacities, thus

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[52] Ibid., p. 123. For background on Victorian travelers, see Janet and Peter Phillips, *Victorians at Home and Away* (London: Croom Helm, 1978); Frederick John Bethke, ed., *Three Victorian Travel Writers: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism on Mrs. Frances Milton Trollope, Samuel Butler, and Robert Louis Stevenson* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1977); George Watson, ed., *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, vol III, (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), pp. 988-93; Edward Cox, *A Reference Guide to the Literature of Travel, including Voyages, Geographical Descriptions, Adventures, Shipwrecks and Expeditions* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1935); Anita Damiani, *Enlightened Observers: British Travellers to the Near East, 1715-1850* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1979); and John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[53] Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. I, p. 390.

[54] Ibid., p. 390.

[55] Ibid., p. 374.

> favoured, were commencing to bear fruit. The Armenian architects thenceforward subserve the taste of their Mussulman masters; and during the long centuries which have elapsed since the Seljuk conquest, the genius of their countrymen has been exploited by the semi-barbarous peoples of Asia, while their abilities and character have progressively declined and become debased.[56]

For Lynch, then, as for Dubois, the early period of Armenian architecture, characterized by strong, simple forms, most expresses the character of the Armenians, while the later monuments, with their ornate, exuberant sculpture, reflect a period of subjugation and dissolution. This view, which merged art and ethnicity, would be retained by later scholars and stressed in particular by Strzygowski.[57] Strzygowski similarly focused on the struggle of racial and ethnic purity against the decay caused by the foreign invader.

Lynch's interest in the role of ethnicity in Armenian architecture may also be seen as the product of a more personal connection—his maternal grandfather was Armenian.[58] Significantly, however, Lynch does not mention his familial ties in *Armenia*. Rather, he writes in the forward of more abstract motivations: "[t]he country and the people . . . are deserving, the one of enthusiasm and the other of the highest interest."[59] While this is not the place to unravel Lynch's psychological circumstances, his views on Armenian architecture must be understood with the knowledge of his own partial Armenian descent.[60]

Conclusion

To conclude, we should consider not only the scholarly value of the travelers' accounts, but also the circumstances under which they were written. In an age of photography, railroads, and airplanes, it is easy to forget the difficulties that these scholars overcame. Given the danger and arduousness of nineteenth-century travel in the East—conditions which are well-documented in the texts—one must admire the level of critical observation present in the assessments of medieval buildings.

We should also remember how little information was available on Armenian architecture at the time. Before Brosset's work in the 1860s, there was virtually no

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[56] Ibid., p. 391.

[57] See C. Maranci, "Armenian Architecture as Aryan Architecture: The Role of Indo-European Studies in the Theories of Josef Strzygowski," *Journal of Visual Resources*, forthcoming.

[58] I thank Professor Dickran Kouymjian for bringing this fact to my attention.

[59] Lynch, *Armenia*, vol. I, p. viii. However, during the second decade of the twentieth century, Lynch became more public about his Armenian affiliation and wrote about his concern for the Armenians living in Turkey in "Open Letter regarding the Armenian Reforms," *The Nation*, 8 November 1913.

[60] Lynch deserves much more attention than he has yet received. There are only a handful of works on this scholar, notably B. Donabedian, *L'Armenie de Lynch* (London: Chickwell Editions, 1902) and, more recently, *Henry Finiss Bloss Lynch: Fragments d'un discours d'Arménie* (Paris: Galerie Berdj Achdjian, 1990), published in conjunction with an exhibit of Lynch's photographs. The booklet includes essays on Lynch by Artémis Ohanian, Haroutioun Kévorkian, and Dickran Kouymjian.

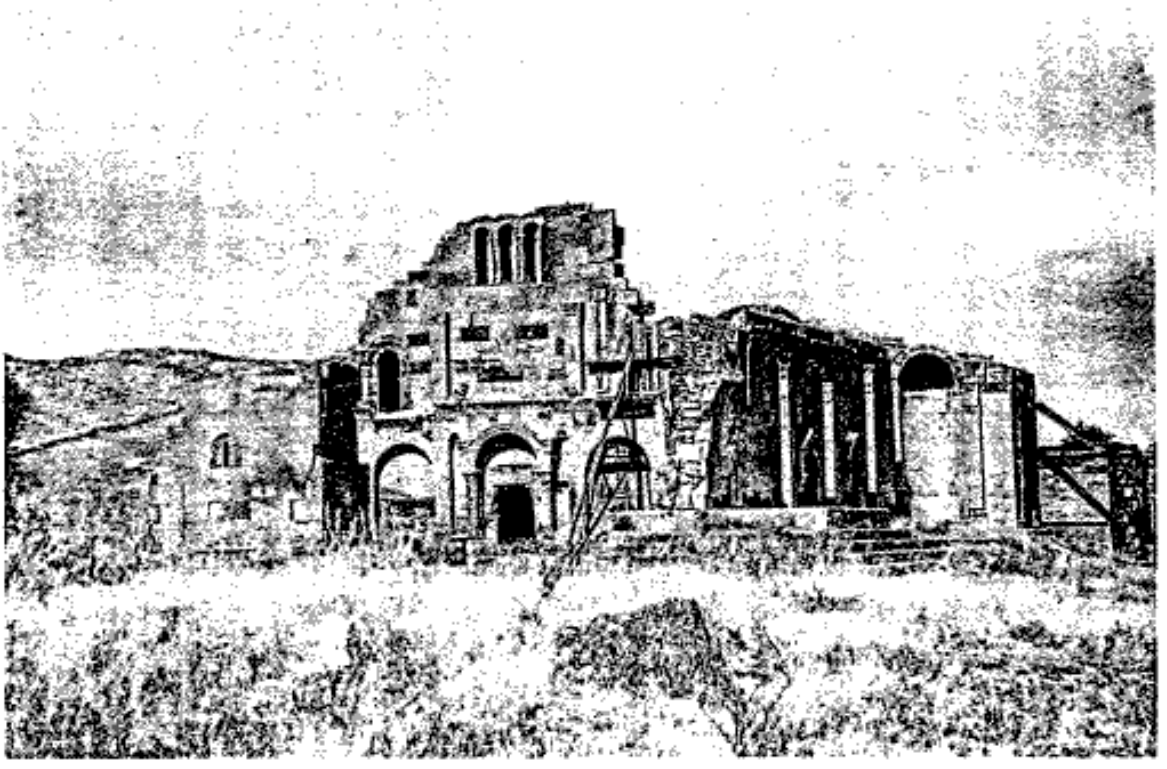

Figure 10: The Basilica of Ereruk'.
Photo: Author

study of Armenian inscriptions in a Western language, thus limiting the discussion of chronology and patronage. There was also very little available in Western languages on the medieval history of Armenia in either translations of early histories or in secondary sources.

The corpus of monuments was also quite limited. Most scholars knew, as we have seen, only a small number of the medieval churches of Armenia; before Lynch, few others than those at Ējmiatsin and Ani were known. Moreover, archeological excavations had not yet revealed the seventh-century church of Zwart'nots', nor the important basilican phases at Duin.

One most curious omission in the accounts is the massive fifth-century basilica at Ereruk', which stands just a few kilometers east of Ani (Fig. 10). One wonders why this monument was omitted—whether it was deliberately ignored, or whether it was hard to reach at that time.[61] It may be that the travelers were simply more in-

[61] H. Abich, the German geologist and traveler, as Dickran Kouymjian has pointed out, did visit the site in 1844, and a small plan of the church is included in his *Aus Kaukasischen Ländern: Reisebriefe* (Vienna: A. Holder, 1896). On this subject, see also D. Kouymjian, "Ereruk'i bazilikayi patmut'ean hetk'rov" (On the Historical Tracks of the Ererouk Basilica), *Hask* 53, nos. 7-8 (July-August 1974), pp. 296-310. This also exists in an Italian translation: "Traccie storiche della basilica di Ererouk," *Ricerca sull'Architettura Armena*, vol. 15, *Fonti*, II (Milan, 1977), pp. 57-72. Armenian scholars were certainly familiar with the monument as well. A drawing by O. Yessayan appears in Ghevond Alishan's *Shirak*, p. 170, Fig. 78. Again, I must thank Professor Kouymjian for bringing this to my attention.

terested in presenting the exotic and foreign-looking later churches, with their conical cupolas, rather than the conventional basilicas of the region (of which comparable examples could be found all over the Roman and Medieval world). Regardless, the result is an over-emphasis on the domed churches of Armenia.

Despite these limitations, each of the scholars presented made significant contributions to the study of Armenian architecture. Already in the 1830s, with the first extensive discussion of the subject in the West, Dubois articulated a distinct Armenian style and considered its origins and diffusion. Texier and Layard launched the discussion of the relations between Armenia and the West, a theme which was taken up by Strzygowski and Baltrušaitis. Finally, Lynch's view of Armenian architecture, which is so closely linked with the ethnic identity of the Armenians, anticipates the racist and nationalist theories presented by Strzygowski. Whether or not we agree with their conclusions, these European travelers raised questions that were to occupy the scholars of succeeding generations and shaped the discourse of Armenian architecture to a much greater degree than has been currently acknowledged.

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